THE JEWS
IN
MODERN MEXICO

By
VICTOR HARRIS
EDITOR B'NAI B'RITH MESSENGER
Los Angeles, California
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Price 25 Cents

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STADT-BIBLIOTHEK
FRANKFURT AM MAIN

PREFACE.

While many books have been written about Mexico, no reference is made in any of them to the Jewish residents of that country. Even the Jewish Encyclopedia dismisses the subject with a few remarks. Still, there are Jews, in small numbers, scattered all through that Republic.

In the City of Mexico there is a Jewish population of about 500 families, and their importance financially is far in excess of their numerical strength. It is for the purpose of acquainting the Jewish public with some facts concerning our co-religionists in that country that I issue this pamphlet, and I hope it will be welcomed among our people.

The narrative embraces from the time I left Los Angeles, August 10th, 1905, until my return, April 18th, 1906.

Respectfully,

THE AUTHOR.

The Jews in Modern Mexico.

Chapter I.

From Los Angeles to the City of Mexico.

Having lately returned from a seven months' journey to our neighboring republic, I have been approached by many of my friends and acquaintances for information as to the state of affairs there in general, and the Jewish people in particular, so I concluded to relate my experience, and shall endeavor, to the best of my ability, to impart all the important facts.

The principal cause of my undertaking this trip was a communication received by a venerable and well-known Jewish resident of this city from an old acquaintance of his, who is at present residing in Mexico, calling attention to the advisability of Russian Jews settling on government land in that republic, which, as he claims, is to be had for the asking. So I concluded to investigate this matter, which might redound to my own benefit, and that of others who would avail themselves of such an opportunity.

Armed with letters of introduction to a gentleman residing at present in the City of Mexico, who is a native Californian, also from our genial District Attorney, Capt. J. D. Fredericks, that I had acted as one of the court interpreters, I set out for the ancient land of the Aztecs.

Apropos of travel I wish to state my opinion that to any one who is afflicted with low spirit, dejectedness, who seems to think that nobody cares whether he is alive or dead (except, perhaps, his mother, and she is six thousand miles away, or the landlord on collection day) the best antidote is a journey to some strange land.

Until El Paso is reached there is nothing that may be termed incidental to this narrative. Of the latter city the traveler gets a foreboding of the metamorphosis he is about to experience, as many swarthy denizens from across the boundary reside there permanently.

There is a fair-sized Jewish community in El Paso, with two congregations, Orthodox and Reform. Several lines of trade, especially dry goods and hardware, seem to be controlled by Jewish merchants, some of whom have branch business houses across the international line, in the Mexican city, "Juarez." In that city many of the important stores belong to Jews, and the finest business block on the principal street bears the name of Felix Brunschwig, the largest dry goods merchant in El Paso, as its owner.

The Mexican Central R.R. starts its trains from El Paso, and the first stop is made in the middle of the bridge spanning the Rio Grande. This latter, which resembles our celebrated Los Angeles River, requires a microscope to discern any water in it. This stop is made to allow the Mexican custom officials to examine the passengers' hand baggage. This is the first encounter with Mexican Government employes, and their easy-going, courteous manner of transacting business contrasts favorably with the brusk, strictly business attitude of our own Anglo-Saxons under similar circumstances.

At "Ciudad Juarez" the baggage of passengers is examined by Mexican customs' officials. The room where this is done resembles a Salvation Army rummage sale, except that the material, as a general rule, is of a superior quality. While pacing up and down the platform, waiting for the train to start, I noticed an Ameri-

can and a Mexican conversing in the Sign language, apparently not making any progress, I "butted" in, to the delight of both, and learned that the American was in search of some one to go to some interior towns and interpret for him, who was engaged in selling goods for an American firm. I mention this incident to demonstrate the truth of the old adage that many happenings in life which may appear insignificant might be turned to advantage some time, as the fact that American drummers need interpreters in Mexico came to me in good stead later on.

Now it is "all aboard," said in good old English, as most of the conductors are Americans. In the car I entered I found a conglomeration of various nationalities, Mexicans and Americans predominating. As the Mexicans are naturally gregarious we were soon like one family. We all got initiated into the mysteries of "Mescal" and "tequila" concoctions. Of course, you are expected to share whatever you possess in the same line, and I had to concoct some story, that my "Rock and Rye" was confiscated on the border. This brought forth a deep sigh from every one present and I was an object of pity. Not to lack in politeness I passed around "cigarros" (cigarettes) and "puros" (cigars); they were pronounced (for courtesy sake) the best in the world, which would make a certain Spring Street cigar dealer here laugh and grow fat had he heard it.

As I was to go through to Mexico City, and wishing to know whether there are any Jews between the border and that city, I started a conversation with a German electrician on the subject, as according to his statement, he has been around that country for the last 20 years—"Es giebt ein wenig Juden uberall," he said in

answer to an inquiry of mine. When I asked him about their general occupation, his reply was, "handel und wandel." He then inquired what countryman I was, and when I told him I was born in Russia his face became livid with rage, he had to take an extra "cerveza de Toluca" (a brand of beer), of which he had quite a supply, to calm his nerves. He was so effusive in his vituperations against that country for her reprehensible treatment of the Jews and others that would make Gorky dance a Rushishe Kazatske with Mrs. Wilshire had they been present. He confided in me that his grandfather was a Hamburg Jew, and was proud that he had Jewish blood in his veins. Since then nothing was too good for his "landsman." From him I also learned that the largest number of Jews in that part of the country was at Chihuahua, about twenty families, nearly all engaged in business, the most important being the Krakauer Hardware Co.

At "Aguas Calientes" I lost my newly acquired friend. Before we parted he shook my hand so hard that I thought he was practicing how to kill Cossacks. His place in the car was taken by two senoritas, very dark and very talkative. As soon as they settled down in their seats they produced cigarettes, offered me one, and started a conversation by inquiring what time it was—what is going on in the land of the "Gringoes" (Americans), etc. But no sooner I began to get interested in their prattle than they flitted out at the third station, telling me a most pleasant and sonorous adios.

There is no lack of diversions along the route. A babel of voices greets the ears of passengers at every station. Venders of all sorts, from edibles to fish poles, mix their voices with those of beggars and ragamuffins,

imploring for a centavo; American young sports throwing a centavo, which they get at the border two hundred for a dollar, among a lot of ragged, barefooted urchins, and watch them scramble for it like if their very lives depended on that coin, and so the time passes on until the City of Mexico is reached, on the third day of departure from the border.

CHAPTER II.

CITY OF MEXICO.

The traveler on arriving in the City of Mexico does not meet with the friendly jehu who offers him a "free ride" in consideration of his stopping at a certain hotel—instead, he encounters a mob of "Cargadores," who seem to be as plentiful as real estate signs on a Los Angeles vacant lot. These are the peons, with long ropes around their necks, who offer to carry anything for you, from a hand bag to a Saratoga trunk, for a small consideration. These people seem to possess superhuman strength, as there is nothing too heavy for them to carry any desired distance. The Mexican Central R.R. Depot presents a very gloomy aspect, as it resembles an old-time horse shed; the neighborhood is also not inviting—all these add to the forlorn condition of the stranger with limited means, who does not know which way to turn.

On looking around for accommodation, I found that, relatively, living expenses are considerably higher than in the United States. The Mexicans blame the Americans for this, as they say the latter are willing to

part with their money and they are readily accommodated. I secured temporary lodging in a place called "American House." This is a misnomer, as the only American there is the landlady, who is only visible when she collects the rent, and I do not even remember the color of her hair; the help is all Mexican, and it must be inconvenient for those not familiar with the Spanish language. Although I paid as much rent as for an up-to-date room in the Figueroa district here, I had nothing else but a "hole in the wall," with a crack in the door as the only ventilation.

My first step was to call on the gentleman to whom I had credentials, to learn his opinion about the suggestion made by his whilom friend and countryman that Russian Jews could be advantageously settled on government lands in Mexico. I was received most affably, the plan seemed feasible to him, but, he remarked, it must be proceeded with very slowly, and promised to do his best in the matter. That he meant it in earnest is shown by the fact that he confided to a "Mexican Herald" reporter, that he is planning a Russian Jewisn colony in Mexico, and, for all I know, he is at it yet, but "very slowly."

As I am rather diffident in forming acquaintanceship, the suggestion by my newly-formed friend to secure me a visiting card to the "American Club," and introduce me to the editor of the Mexican Herald, was most acceptable. The privileges at the American Club is extended for two weeks, which may be renewed six times. As far as getting acquainted is concerned, I might as well have been in a deaf and dumb asylum. Once a Texan, noticing my watch charm, which is in the shape of a star, the emblem of the order B'Nai

B'rith, inquired whether I came from the "Lone Star State," and when I answered negatively he disappeared like a Kansas wooden house before a cyclone. Like all well regulated club houses this one has a dining-room; among the printed rules displayed there is one "not to tip the waiters." This must be to call attention that tipping is very much in vogue, as the only way to escape this prevailing custom would be by changing tables at every meal, until the number is exhausted, using the same table again only when there is a change of waiters. Contracted bills for lunches, etc., are settled there semi-monthly—when I paid mine, making at the same time a verbal application for a prolongation of two weeks, I was not informed that a $5 fee goes with every renewal, therefore I was surprised when on settling my second bill a slip was handed me, with my signature, which the clerk copied from my entry in the roster of visiting members, stipulating the payment of that extra $5. It looked rather curious that my name should be signed without my knowledge, but I took it to be what they call there "costumbre del pais," which covers a good many apparent shortcomings.

At the office of the Mexican Herald I furnished an eager reporter half a column of "copy" about myself, and the following morning it was known in the Jewish community, which is composed mainly of either natives of the United States or those who had lived there, that there is a new "yid" in town. On returning home in the evening I found a note left by a Jewish gentleman, stating that he and several other co-religionists would like to meet me. I was only too glad of the opportunity to come in contact with my people, especially as the holidays—Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur—were

now approaching, and I wanted to know if there was anything doing in the line of holding services. So I lost no time the following morning in calling at the place indicated. I found an Alsatian Jew of middle age, engaged in making translations, in various langauges, in a Mexican law office. He welcomed me most effusively, and stated his reason for wanting to meet me, his reading in the Herald about my arrival and being a stranger, and was ready to render me any service I might be in need of. It is the old story—those unfavored by fortune are generally the most solicitous for the welfare of the wayfarers and strangers, who often need only a kind word and a little advice to put them on the right track.

From my newly acquired friend I learned that although there were desultory holding of religious services on the high holidays on former occasions, in private residences, nothing of a definite shape occurred until the year previous, 1904. At that time a Sepher Torah and other necessary paraphernalia were secured and regular services held in a room given free by the Masonic fraternity in one of its buildings. The credit for this is principally due to two gentlemen, namely: Julio Meyer and N. Grossman. The former is a native of Prussia, province of Posen, had lived in the United States and came to Mexico from San Francisco twenty odd years ago. He is in the merchant tailoring business on Calle San Francisco and has the contract to supply uniforms to street car employes. He is considered a well-to-do man. Mr. Grossman is a Russian, has lived in Mexico about ten years, was first in the dyeing and cleaning business; then a traveling optician, and

now keeps a curio and jewelry store on Calle San Francisco, next to Porter's Hotel. The incidental expense was raised by subscription among resident Jews; those not attending services also contributing. At the services, which are of the old style, Mr. Meyer acts as "Parnas" (President) and Mr. Grossman as Cantor, which duty he discharges creditably, considering the conditions.

A few days before Rosh Hashanah I was handed an invitation card to the coming services by an elderly gentleman, who is interested in a jewelry and curio store, situated about a block up the street from where Messrs. Meyer and Grossman are located. This party, who is a Hungarian, owing to his advanced age and fair knowledge of matters pertaining to Judaism, is looked upon by some of the "deutschen" as a sort of unofficial "Head of the Community." He himself modestly admits that the only reason that entitles him to this distinction is—he had lived in a small place in Texas where he was the "Rosh Hakohol" (head of the community), but, he adds jokingly, the entire congregation consisted of himself, as he was the only Jew there. Strange to say, neither he nor any of his family attended services later.

By that time I formed the acquaintance of a gentleman who was destined to play an important and curious part in my future experiences in the City of Mexico—Professor Francisco Rivas. Having heard that I possess some knowledge of Hebrew and Jewish lore of the old "Yeshive Bochur" variety, he sought and obtained an introduction through our mutual friend, Mr.

Moises, the Alsatian previously mentioned. He was introduced to me as a "Portuguese Jew." He is an eminent linguist and scholar, being actually engaged as professor of Greek and Hebrew in one of the government colleges, and giving private lessons to scions of high-class Mexican families in ancient and modern languages. He is apparently between 55 and 60 years of age, of distinguished appearance, with long, flowing beard, but with no trace of Jewish features whatever.

His biography, as I learned from him, is, in part, as follows: Was born in Campeche, Mexico, of Sephardi (descendants of Spanish exiles) Jewish parents; has lived in Mexico City over 30 years; always engaged in literary occupations, and was at one time editor of a Jewish paper, published in the Spanish language, in the City of Mexico.

He seems to enjoy a vast acquaintance and popularity, as on passing through the principal streets he is kept constantly occupied in showering salutations right and left to passers-by. His circle of intimate friends embraces all the high officials, including the president and vice-president of the republic. At his residence, in a suburb of the city, he and his wife, who is a Cuban of high caste and many accomplishments, entertain high and low, rich and poor, with the same affability and whole-heartedness, like true children of the Patriarch Abraham. To them may truly be applied the Biblical adage "a good name is better than sons and daughters," as of the latter they have none.

At our first meeting he insisted on having me as his guest to dinner, which invitation I accepted for some

future date. When that time came I not only had a gastronomic treat, but also a rare spiritual delight, as I found in his possession a well-stocked library of ancient and modern Hebrew manuscripts and books. Our conversation was carried on mostly in Hebrew, and my imagination carried me back to the old days at home —engaged in dissertation with some savant of the old school on Rabbinical homiletics. I was shown some correspondence he had had some years ago with prominent Jews, in this country and in Europe, on the subject of settling the persecuted of our race on government lands in Mexico, an account of which appeared at that time in the Hebrew Standard of New York, with a description and photo of the Professor, but it came to naught, as the mills of the gods grind slowly, especially when cold charity is concerned. Being such a good and faithful Jew he readily accepted my invitation to attend services on the now fast approaching holidays, and as we parted it was with the consciousness on my part that there are a few good people in this world—becoming oblivious for the nonce of my loneliness as a stranger in a strange land.

The cards of invitation were tasteful affairs of some elaborateness, being printed upon pink bristol board in three colors. Across the front obliquely, from the lower left to upper right hand corners, were the words "Happy New Year," flanked above and below by the numerals 5666. This printing was in gold.

The invitation ran thus:

You and your family
are cordially invited to attend religious services of our New Year (Rosh Hashanah) at 5a Calle Mina No. 8½

Masonic Hall on Friday, Sept. 29th, 7:30 p. m. sharp.

Also for the day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) on Oct. 8th on Sunday night at 6:30 p. m. sharp.

The Committee.

The invitation must be shown at the door.

Mexico City, Sept. 1905.

While the invitation specifies evening services, it was meant also for one day Rosh Hashanah in the morning and the entire day Yom Kippur. I inquired as to the reason "the invitation must be shown at the door," being that it was free, and learned for the first time that some of the Jewish merchants, especially those engaged in the retail trade, are reluctant to have their race or religion paraded before the public. What ground there is for this I do not know, my personal experience, covering a 7 months' sojourn among the Mexicans, would not indicate the existence of race hatred or religious prejudice on the part of modern Spanish Americans. Although my nationality and religious affiliation were known, I only heard the name Jew mentioned sneeringly once, and that was by an inebriate American; when he sobered up, and his attention was called to it by another American, he publicly apologized and treated all present with a round of cigars.

When a reporter for an English paper approached me for details on the subject of our holidays, I, in deference to the opinion of others, kept silent, but that did not deter the insistent scribe from expatiating to his heart's content, at every opportunity, what is happening in the Jewish community. With flaring headlines he announced that services were going to be held on such a date—were held, etc., relying for particulars

upon information he had gained in the United States. Strange to say, none of the Spanish papers considered the matter of sufficient importance to give it a mention.

When I arrived at Masonic Hall on Rosh Hashanah eve Professor Rivâs, having with him another Professor —De Leon, was already there. The latter does not claim to be a Jew; possesses some knowledge of Hebrew, and has a vague idea that his ancestors were Spanish Jewish exiles. The attendance was small and the services gone through perfunctorily. Then I met for the first time the acting chazon, Mr. Grossman, and Mr. A. Goldbaum, native of Los Angeles, who is city agent for a mineral water concern, the general manager of which is also a Los Angeles man, Leo Fleishman, a cousin of the Hellmans. Mr. Goldbaum did not show up again, as he explained to me afterwards, his knowledge of Hebrew is nil and the proceedings have no attraction for him. As a child, in Los Angeles, he was a pupil of Rabbi Edelman's Sabbath School in the B'nai B'rith Synagogue, but whatever religious instruction he gained at that time passed out completely of his memory.

In the morning the attendance was slightly better. I was invited to take part in conducting the services and say a few words on the significance of the day, but not wanting to act at a moment's notice, I promised to comply with their wish on Yom Kippur.

The Sunday intervening between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur was an important one for the members of the American colony in Mexico, as the Guggenheim Pavilion of the American Hospital was then dedicated. It was erected by the Guggenheim Bros., at a cost of

$26,000, in memory of their departed mother, and was named the Barbara Guggenheim Pavilion. To me as an American citizen and a Jew, this event had a double significance—the donors being American Jews. So I lost no time to be on time. I found at the entrance, acting on the reception committee, Mr. I. J. Seligman, a relative of the Guggenheims and their financial representative in Mexico, Mrs. Seligman and their daughter, Miss Seligman. Another member of the reception committee was Mr. M. Elssaser, a prominent Jewish-American engaged in mining enterprises in Mexico.

The hospital, which is operated by the "American Benevolent Society," of which Mr. Seligman was at that time Honorary Secretary, is ideally located, with spacious grounds, and has one free ward for indigent Americans. What struck me as peculiar is that not a word was said to dedicate the new pavilion, not even a clergyman's prayer or blessing. In this country there would be orations galore on an occasion like this; there, people came, looked around, sipped some coffee or other beverage served by a bevy of young ladies, with a smile thrown in for good luck, then retraced their steps, rejoicing with the knowledge that a new link has been added to the chain of American institutions. One young minister of some Christian sect I noticed among the throng. He was rather handsome, except for a flat nose, and seemed to think his duty ended by entertaining the young ladies behind the refreshment tables.

On Yom Kippur eve the attendance was slightly better than on Rosh Hashanah. Mr. Grossman officiated. Of course, Professor Rivas was there, enveloped in a Talith

and following the prayers with close attention. On the following day Mr. Berlinger, a German Jew, who is connected with the Mexican Central R. R. in a clerical capacity, recited part of the morning prayers; he was followed by Mr. Grossman, completing the Shacharis and reading from the Torah; I then delivered an address on the importance and significance of the day, and conducted the Musaph services; a commercial traveler named Brill, member of a renowned family of scholars of the same name in Russia and Germany, said the Mincha prayers; was followed by another "knight of the road," a Portuguese Jew who had received the training of a Rabbi but does not follow it, with some remarks; Mr. Grossman closing the day's devotions. The average attendance, allowing for some leaving and others coming, was between 50 and 60 people.

Although the high class Jews there, by which is meant now-a-days those who have plenty of money, generally sidetrack anything of this kind, there were a few exceptions to this rule, as for example: Dr. L. B. Speyer, who had been for many years associated with his father as dentists, and is now head of the banking firm of L. B. Speyer & Co. He stayed at the hall the greater part of the day, and asked me to recite Kadish with him. As he explained to me, he does it on account of his father, who died during the same year and who was an observant Jew; L. Blum, who amassed a fortune as a horse trader, with his whole family; one of the Samuel Bros., an Anglo-Mexican firm of bankers, importers and exporters, and members of the widely known Samuel family of London.

While I delivered my discourse during the day, I noticed a young man particularly attentive, but to my

surprise, when I spoke to him at the close of the services he looked at me with his big, brown eyes and smiled—he did not understand a word of English! When I asked him in his own language (Spanish), why he was so interested in my speaking if he did not comprehend, he answered naively that as it was Yom Kippur he was sure that I was saying something very good! I then learned that although the majority understood English there were some who came to Mexico direct from the Old Country and did not understand a word, still they stared at me as if they knew Webster's dictionary by heart.

Among the cosmopolitan assembly of worshipers there were only two Lithuanian women—Mrs. Grossman and her sister Miss Rosenblum. Before the close of the services the former sized up the number of strangers, those who had no families of their own, and sent her sister to prepare "breakfast" for all, she had seen that done in her old home in Kovno, and so it must be in Mexico. So it happened that when the last blow of the Shofar was heard and the erstwhile devout left for their respective homes, Mrs. Grossman remained to gather up the strangers, to make them feel at home, temporarily, at least.

When I noticed that she already had enough to fill up an ordinary size restaurant, I tried to get away stealthily, but she had her eye on me, and in a moment there was also a hand on me, and no possibility of escaping. We all repaired to the modest "Vivienda" of the Grossmans, where a most pleasant evening was passed, consuming the victuals, which were of the style "mother used to make," and exchanging reminiscences of the respective foreign countries we had visited, as we were all more or

less of the globe-trotting genus. Especially interesting were the narratives about the Jewish people in various South American countries.

The following morning the Mexican Herald had the following account of our Yom Kippur services:

THE HEBREW ANNIVERSARY OF YOM KIPPUR CELEBRATED AS NEVER BEFORE.

Never before in the history of the city was the great Hebrew anniversary of Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement, celebrated with such elaborate services as during the whole of yesterday. The services were extremely interesting and a large number of persons of the ancient race were present throughout the entire exercises.

The services began at 8 o'clock in the morning and it was after 6 o'clock last evening before they were concluded. Very few of the persons in attendance left the hall during the day, except during a short recess about midday. During all this time the worshipers were fasting, as not a single devout member broke his fast from sunset on Sunday evening until about 6:30 last evening.

N. Grossman and Victor Harris, conducted the greater part of the services of the day, but, in addition to these gentlemen, there were several others who assisted in the reading of the Scriptures, the saying of the prayers, etc., which form an essential part of the ritual of the day.

About 1:30 o'clock in the afternoon Victor Harris, who has lately come to the city from Los Angeles, California, delivered a sermon in English to the congregation. Mr. Harris urged upon his hearers the necessity of establishing a permanent place of worship in the city, saying that he believed the time had come for the Hebrews

of the city to erect a synagogue, where they would be able to have their services conducted in a proper manner. Another very interesting thing about the address was the interpretation that he gave to the account of the swallowing of Jonah by the whale.

According to Mr. Harris, this story of Jonah and the Whale is entirely allegorical, and it is intended to show the people of Israel how they ought to preserve themselves as a race in spite of the adverse conditions by which they are often surrounded.

"Jonah," said Mr. Harris, "represents the Jewish people, and the whale by which he is said to have been swallowed, represents the world, by which they are surrounded. Jonah said, 'I am a Hebrew,' and although he went into the belly of the whale, he came forth again, and the Jews who preserve their religion are bound to come forth unscathed from the belly of the world, just as Jonah did from the whale."

CHAPTER III.

FUTILE ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH A CONGREGATION.

From what I heard in private conversation convinced me that a permanent Jewish congregation on a small scale could be started, if only some one should take the initiative, so I concluded to make the attempt. I enlisted the aid of Professor Rivas and Messrs. Julio Meyer and N. Grossman; all proved to be willing workers, and after securing a few more sympathizers with the movement, we decided on Simchath Torah, which happened to be on a Sunday, as the day of effecting an organization, if possible.

On the afternoon of the appointed time, eight of us met by agreement at the historic Iturbide Hotel and from there boarded an electric car for the residence of Professor Rivas, who previously offered it for this purpose, in the quaint and beautiful suburb of Tacubaya. On our arrival we were most courteously welcomed by the host and hostess and after exchange of greetings we proceeded to business. I called the meeting to order and proposed the Professor for chairman.

The following preamble and minutes I drew up that time to be entered on record:

"Whereas a number of Israelities residing in the City of Mexico, realizing the duty they owe to themselves, their God and their holy religion, have concluded to form an organization for the purpose of holding occasional religious services, be mutually helpful in case of need, assist and befriend the stranger, and eventually to acquire a piece of land for a Jewish cemetery, assembled at the residence of Professor F. Rivas, No. 9 Calle de la Luz, Tacubaya, D. F., Oct. 22, 1905, Tishri 23, 5666, to carry into effect this laudable object.

"After some appropriate remarks by Professor F. Rivas, in which he explained the object of the gathering and the urgency of the steps about to be taken, an organization was formed under the name "Emanuel" and the following officers elected: President, Professor F. Rivas; vice-president, Julio Meyer; treasurer, N. Grossman; English Secretary, Victor Harris; Spanish Secretary, M. Assael; trustees, A. Assael, J. E. Allalouf, M. Spindler.

"It was decided to meet every first Sunday in the month, 3:30 p. m., beginning with the month of December, 1905; Vice-president Meyer promising to secure a meeting place.

"The dues were fixed at $1.00 per month.

"A vote of thanks to Professor Rivas for having offered his residence for this occasion and rendering other valuable assistance, was unanimously given.

"It was decided that general elections shall be held every first Sunday in January, and payment of dues shall begin December, 1905."

Besides those who were present, seven other names were entered as charter members by authorization of the parties.

After the meeting the welfare of the new congregation was toasted by every one present with bumpers of champagne, furnished by Mr. Julio Meyer, and other vintage, liberally supplied by the Professor. Mr. Meyer also brought several boxes of best Mexican cigars and Mrs. Rivas took good care none of us should leave the house hungry, and so, amidst great enthusiasm, accompanied by good cheer, the first Jewish congregation on Mexican soil was launched into the sea of religious life and usefulness, the profusion of tropical flowers and plants in which the cottage of the Professor is embedded lending an enchanting charm to the situation.

After one of the members recited the evening prayers we parted for our respective homes, promising each other to be mutually helpful in advancing the interest of the new movement.

On arriving in the city I was the guest of Vice-president Meyer to a late supper at the Maison Dore, where to the sweet strains of Mexican and American music wafted across the spacious dining room from the orchestra we reiterated our adhesion to the new congregation, and it was in the morning of another day when I finally reached home, exceedingly pleased with the work accomplished.

When I visited Mr. Meyer a few days later to talk over congregation matters, I found him an entirely changed man; someone must have poisoned his mind, telling him that he was entitled to be first president; at least that is what I understood from his conversation. Moreover, he claims that Simon Weil and Mr. Berlinger, old-time residents of the city, aver that they have known Professor Rivas for over 30 years and are positive he is a "goy!" I looked up the Professor and succeeded in arranging between these two that Mr. Meyer should become president and the Professor vice-president, but when I broached the subject to some of the members they vehemently objected, saying the Professor was elected and president he shall remain—and so Congregation Emanuel came to an end!

I have not been able since to get at the truth whether Professor Rivas is a Jew or not, but if he is a "goy" he is the best yiddish goy or goyesher yid I have ever met, for while there are some French Jews, with German names, in Mexico, who would rather conceal their identity, he takes advantage of every opportunity to let the world know he is a Jew. I have heard it said that when he was called to the Torah on Yom Kippur he did not know how to make the "Brocho;" but why did Moises, Grossman, and others who have also known him for a number of years, always consider him as a Jew?

Even now Mr. Meyer was satisfied to have him act as vice-president—if he is not a Jew how could he be an officer of a Jewish congregation? All this is puzzling, but the worst is—it thwarted my plan to form a Jewish congregation in Mexico.

CHAPTER IV.

FUNERAL OF MRS. SELIGMAN.

Although my endeavors to form a Jewish congregation in Mexico City proved futile, the fact that I officiated and lectured on Yom Kippur establish my reputation as a sort of uncrowned "Rabbi." Some even honored me with the title "Doctor" despite the fact that I never even hinted that I am, or care to be, either one or the other. The worst of it is—the intelligent classes in Mexico are wont to look at clergymen askance, and when I was introduced by some of my friends to their Mexican acquaintances as a "Padre," I became an object of suspicion. When it was explained to them that I was a Jewish padre, that mistrustfulness became mixed with a sort of indefinable curiosity.

Several incidents during my later stay in Mexico would tend to prove that I was generally considered a full-fledged Rabbi, and I will herewith relate a few of them.

About the middle of November Mrs. Seligman, wife of Mr. I. J. Seligman, previously mentioned in connection with the Guggenheim pavilion dedication, died. This family being one of the few in Mexico of pure blood, that is to say, not intermarried with gentiles, desired a Jewish funeral service, therefore two friends of the family, Messrs. Max Loeb and M. Elssaser, called on me with a request to officiate, to which I readily consented. After services at the house and on my way to take the funeral car for the cemetery I was approached by the Christian minister, whom I had seen at the hospital dedication, who wanted to know in

what relation I stand to the Jewish "church." I explained to him that in our religion, being that no intermediary is required between God and His creatures, any one who is able to say the Hebrew prayers, and knows the meaning thereof, is considered competent to act at religious functions, especially when there is no ordained Rabbi available; moreover, I added, my early training in Europe was that of a Rabbi, which I do not follow as an occupation, and when I do act as one it is as a layman, not with any mercenary object, as I do not accept any remuneration. He then related that his services are often requisitioned at Jewish funerals and only recently officiated at the funeral of a Jewish child. But, as he himself stated, that only the mother was a Jewess, I supposed that accounts for it! He then left me and I missed him at the cemetery although almost the entire American colony was there. At the services in the American cemetery Mr. Elssaser, who acted for the family, requested the gentlemen present to don their hats; as this was not done at the house, I suppose it is because I recited the Kaddish in Hebrew. I noticed that rocks were put on the coffin before the grave was filled, the reason for it I was unable to ascertain.

When Mr. Loeb asked me later to call at his office for my fee I told him that for myself I would not accept any, but that as collections were being taken up in nearly all parts of the world for the Russian sufferers in Odessa and elsewhere, subsequent to the October massacres, he may, if he wishes, contribute for this purpose in memory of Mrs. Seligman. This was accordingly done and fifty dollars in gold sent to the treasurer of that fund, Mr. Jacob H. Schiff.

I took occasion to put the question to Mr. Loeb, who is one of the leaders in the American and Jewish colonies, if he did not consider the time propitious for the establishment of a permanent Jewish congregation, in view of the constant increase of Jewish settlers, to which he vouchsafed no answer.

Some time later a Methodist minister by the name of Dr. Brown, brother of ex-Health Officer Dr. Brown of Long Beach, Cal., created a stir in the American colony by an address he delivered before a local temperance society, vehemently denouncing the managers of the Fourth of July celebration for allowing spirituous beverages to be sold on the ground. This brought forth a controversial correspondence in the English newspapers which at times resembled a hot spell in Yuma. The Mexican Herald solicited my opinion on the subject from a Jewish standpoint, and I herewith republish the following excerpt from my contribution, for the purpose of showing that I challenged the advocates of total abstinence from a Bibical point of view, which, by the way, remained unanswered:

"Since Brother Brown puts a Christian flavor on his pet theory of total abstinence, I would respectfully ask the reverend gentleman to point out a single passage either in the Old or New Testament where the moderate use of spirituous beverages is condemned, the injunctions of all forms of religion being merely against gluttony and over-indulgence of any sort.

"Among the miracles related to have been performed by the founder of the Christian religion, or rather, founded in his name, since he himself was a strict adherent of the Jewish religion and emphatically pro-

claimed that 'not one iota of the old law shall be abrogated,' is one wherein he is said to have converted water into wine. If he had agreed with Dr. Brown, this miracle ought to have been metamorphosed, and all the wine in the world would have been turned into water. There would have been enough of this liquid to irrigate the arid plains of Samaria.

"Admitting that the Christian religion is unqualifiedly against the social glass, there is no reason why the American colony in this city, which, like the mother country, is cosmopolitan and composed of actual Christians, nominal Christians, and no Christians at all, should taboo it."

Chapter V.

A GUEST OF HONOR AT A CATHOLIC FUNCTION.

The following incident will illustrate the good fellowship extant among the various creeds in modern Mexico.

A Catholic priest, known as "Father Hunt Cortez," arranged a special celebration in his church in honor of some degree conferred upon him by the Pope. He invited ministers of different denominations to participate in the ceremonies, and having learned through the newspapers and individuals that there is a Jewish "Rabbi" in town he sent me a cordial invitation to be present, asking me at the same time to bring my "Vestments." I replied that I had no Rabbinical Vestment, not even an "Arbah Kanfoth," but I signified my willingness to be present, as to visit churches and witness the services is one of the features which foreigners indulge in while sojourning in Mexico.

On the Sunday morning when that function took place I occupied a seat of honor among many notables who came to pay their respects to the venerable priest. The church, named "Loreta," is an antiquated structure, dating back to the 16th century, and is one of the landmarks in Mexico.

During the progress of the services, which were mainly ceremonial and symbolical, and of which I had not the faintest conception, I was musing on the transmutation of the times!

Here I was a guest of honor among worshipers of the Catholic faith, in a land where less than a century ago the "auto de fe" held full sway, and the merest suspicion of one following the ancient laws of Moses was sufficient to furnish him with involuntary transportation to the mysterious beyond, and thoughts of joy and sorrow crowded my mind in juxtaposition. I rejoiced that there are some lands, at least, where there is light for the children of Israel, but felt anguished for the millions of our people still dwelling in the dark countries of intolerance and persecution.

At the conclusion of the exercises in the auditorium of the church all repaired to the vestry where everyone was requested to write his name and some epigraph, suitable to the occasion, preferably each in his native tongue, as there were several nationalities represented. I wrote mine in Hebrew, which some mistook for Chinese and looked around for the son of the celestial empire.

While this was going on the priest, who is a little, weazened old man, stood in the center of the room, receiving felicitations and embraces from those present. He kept on calling for "abrazos" until the last dark-

eyed Senorita closed the door behind her. I noticed that the more beautiful the senorita the longer the abrazo lasted. And on the faces of the young bloods of the masculine gender was depicted the sentiment: "Who would not be a Catholic priest?"—for the time being at least.

Some time in December, 1905, the inhabitants of the City of Mexico, especially the members of the American colony. were suddenly startled with the announcement that Consul-General Parsons, of the United States Legation, was instantly killed in a trolley accident. He was driving to the Mexican National depot in a hired vehicle to see some friends off for the United States, and, it is alleged, through the gross carelessness of the driver, it collided with an electric car and Mr. Parsons, who rose from his seat in an endeavor to shield his wife and son, was hurled against a post and expired on the spot. This cast a gloom over all classes of people, as Mr. Parsons was very popular and generally beloved.

The various American Societies took charge of the funeral arrangements, which were held at the local Episcopal church.

On my entry in the church at the time of the funeral I was recognized as the one who officiated at the Seligman funeral and was assigned a place among the clergy of various denominations. This was the first church funeral I have ever attended and I found the services awe-inspiring and impressive in the extreme. The prayers for the dead recited by this Christian sect are mostly from our Psalms, and the entire exercises have a Jewish aspect, except for an occasional mention of the "Son" and "Holy Ghost."

The remains were conveyed to the French cemetery temporarily, to be taken later to the United States. This is the most important and beautiful burial place in the city, and many of the high caste Mexican families have their plots there. As I retraced my steps towards the gate, after the body was deposited in a vault, I noticed two elegantly attired Mexican young women in front of a stately mausoleum on their knees, praying aloud to their departed kindred. They did not look to the right or the left and their devotion was something remarkable. I thought to myself it may be an illusion, but one that brings consolation to the weary soul is worth having!

I mention the above few incidents to demonstrate the state of affairs in that part of the world—deference was accorded to me when I had officiated only a few times, the real article would have surely received the homage due to a spiritual guide of the community.

I take the stand that the time is now ripe to organize a Jewish congregation in Mexico City and have a professional Rabbi at the head of it; it only lacks an influential leader to conciliate the diverse factions. It is to be regretted that we do not possess the missionary spirit of our Christian neighbors, at least among our people. Such a personage as Jacob H. Schiff, the Strauses, or others of that caliber could easily consummate the forming of a congregation among the Jews there.

With this I do not mean to say that they should do personal missionary work, neither do the Christian nabobs, as a rule, exert themselves individually in this direction, but they make their money and influence felt, through others, in the remotest corners of the globe

"to spread the gospel." We have our gospel first handed, pure and undefiled, and it is worth while spreading.

To be convinced that enough of our co-religionists reside in the City of Mexico to support a congregation one has only to take a stroll on Calle San Francisco, the principal retail business street in the republic, he will come across many stores owned by Jews. At one of the corners where the name of the street is changed to "Plateros" is the "La Esmeralda" jewelry store, the largest of its kind in the country, and second only to Tiffany's on the American continent. It is one of the show places in Mexico, owing to its beautiful exterior, and elegant interior appointments. It was established in 1864 by Hauser, Zivy & Co., who have recently retired to Paris, where they also have an establishment of the same sort, and left the management of their Mexican branch to their nephews, Messrs. Bloch and Ulman.

One block higher up, on the same street, is the wholesale and retail crockery establishment of Loeb Hermanos (Brothers), also considered the most important in the country. The brothers Loeb, it is stated, are cousins of the widely known Straus Brothers, Oscar, Isidor and Nathan, of New York.

There are very few travelers in Mexico who do not pay a visit to the Viga canal. This is a narrow channel of muddy water used by truck farmers to convey their wares to the city. In the itinerary of sightseeing is included a scow ride up that canal where several stops are made to visit the quaint native villages on the opposite shore. During the trip the stranger notices a mass-

ive stone building, several blocks frontage, which he puts down as some government institution, owing to its immensity. But on reaching the entrance he beholds the above sign "Strauss, Kuhn & Co.,—he is then informed that it is the largest distillery in the republic, owned by German Jews.

Among the private banking houses the most important are those of the Scherers, father and son, the father being also counsel-general of Persia to the republic of Mexico. In the wholesale and commission districts the names Dreyfus, Bloch, etc., abound—what is lacking yet is the Jewish proletariat, as under the present economic conditions unskilled workers cannot compete with Mexican peons, whose wages are very low, and nearly all the Jews there have their shingles out.

It is to the credit of the Jews there that, although not organized, they contribute liberally whenever the "hat is passed around," to relieve a case of distress. Several instances came to my notice and I will here state one as an example: An opera company, playing an engagement in one of the local theaters, failed in business. Among the stranded choristers were some Americans, among them three Jews, two belonging in Los Angeles. The English newspapers issued a call for subscriptions to send the unfortunates home, but as this is a slow process, several Jewish ladies made the rounds among the wealthy Jewish merchants, and in a few hours enough was raised to return them to their respective homes, provided with all conveniences.

Chapter VI.

HOW I BECAME A MEMBER OF THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.

In the beginning of this narrative, I related how, when arriving in Mexico City on August 15th, 1905, I took temporary lodging in a place called "American House." On looking around for more suitable quarters I was referred to the Young Men's Christian Association, who several years previous established a branch in that city. There was nothing available in the English branch, and was referred by the affable secretary, Mr. Babcock, to Secretary Williams, of the Mexican branch, which was recently organized. There I found something that suited me, or, rather, my resources. After I paid a month's rent in advance the secretary informed me that only members of the Association enjoy the privilege of habitation there, so I put up an extra $5 for initiation and $2 for a month's dues and became a member of the Mexican branch of the Young Men's Christian Association, although I am neither a Mexican nor a Christian, and do not possess the third qualification.

When I filled out the application blank for membership, the point where it specifies "religion" made me hesitate. The secretary having noticed that wanted to know the reason, and I then owned up that I belong to the Jewish faith and was in doubt whether I am eligible for membership in a Christian society. He smiled benignantly and vouchsafed the information that although the organizers of the institution are Protestant denominations of the United States, the members of the

Mexican branch are nearly all Catholics, nominally, at least, and it is entirely unsectarian, having also some Jews as members in both branches.

To the credit of these associations I must state that they are engaged in a noble task, more so than in the mother country, as nowhere is a kind word and friendly advice so appreciated as when one is a stranger in a strange land. Both branches have libraries and reading rooms at the disposal of the public in general, and every visitor is accorded a hearty welcome from the respective secretaries, who reside on the premises with their families.

The Mexican branch, although younger in years, or rather days, as it was not a year old when I joined it, is far better and more comfortably situated than the English. It is located on Calle Patoni No. 1, in the heart of the finest residential part of the city. Like all other better class of edifices in Mexico, the home of the association surrounds a patio, or courtyard, replete with exotic and native plants, with a squirting fountain in the center.

Although the branches in Mexico, as in this country, are of a semi-religious nature, more latitude is allowed the members, as, for example: smoking is permitted in all parts of the buildings; billiards and pool are played at so much per cue. They also have what they call their "Spa," which in plain words is a restaurant, where meals and refreshments are furnished at moderate prices.

On Sundays no games are allowed; instead, religious gatherings are held. In the English branch is added what they call a "Social Hour;" that is, a number of

ladies and gentlemen assemble for the purpose of exchanging views on religious matters. Each one present is called upon to relate his or her "experience" since he or she became acquainted with the "Holy Ghost." After taking turns in regaling the audience with some epic as to how he or she became imbued with religious sentiments and how happy they were with the thought that at some future date they will cross the bridge of eternity in a hand basket, guided by celestial satellites, coffee and light lunch are served by voluntary waiters —to remind them, I suppose, that they are yet on this side of the bridge. As an epilogue the hat is passed around as the coin of the realm is indispensable even to a religious body.

When I attended one of these convocations the usual call was made upon me for my say as a good "Christian." I surprised them all by stating that the Holy Ghost had never favored me with a visit; that I try to be as good a Jew as possible, which I considered sufficient even to cross the famous bridge; but, I added, as my people have absolutely nothing of a religious aspect in that part of the world, I was pleased to enjoy their hospitality, as the "next best," even if I do not agree with them on spiritual matters. My remarks must have been to the point, as at the conclusion they were heartily applauded.

After the meeting the first one to greet me with a cordial handshake was Mrs. Babcock, the wife of the general secretary. She is a very pleasant woman and an active and popular figure in the American colony. She expressed surprise at my statement that the Jews had no religious association of some sort, as she person-

ally knew many wealthy Jewish families who, she thought, would do something for their religion.

In the Mexican branch they have also occasionally this coffee-sandwich-prayer combination, but there all the hats are left on their pegs, and none is passed around to coax the shekels from unyielding pockets, as, according to the secretary, it is yet in an experimental stage, and he is afraid there would be a scarcity of attendance and an abundance of grub if a collection were taken up.

The Honorary President of the Mexican branch is Senor Ramon Corral, Vice-president of the republic and Minister of the Interior. I took advantage of my connection with the institution to secure an audience with that gentleman. This was very easy, as the high-class Mexicans are most approachable and courteous to visitors. Every official has certain days for granting interviews and on one of these I sent up my card, and when my turn came, I was ushered into his presence.

My reception was exceedingly cordial, and during our conversation I took occasion to propound to him these questions: What is the policy of the present Mexican administration in reference to religious liberty; especially as regards the Jew? Should ever any of the societies engaged in ameliorating the condition of the Jews turn their attention to Mexico, what opportunity is there for colonization? To the first question he replied emphatically that the laws in this respect are the same as in the United States; there is complete liberty of conscience, and the Jews, of course, are no exception. As regards the second question—personally he is in favor of Jewish colonization in Mexico, but officially his department does not deal with such matters, and he re-

ferred me to the Department of Fomento, which signifies, promoting and encouraging various enterprises. There I was informed by a head of a sub-department, a very accommodating and amiable young man, that the government is in possession of large tracts of "terrenos baldios," which means vacant lands, which any responsible corporation or individual can secure some of, on condition the grantee has it surveyed, cultivated and then pay taxes on it. Of the Jews, he had a very favorable opinion, although his knowledge of them,, according to his statement, is limited to the Speyers, in whose office in New York he assisted in signing the bonds of the last forty-million-dollar loan, and to the Esmeralda jewelry store, where he buys his goods.

Although I have lived in the Y. M. C. A. building for three months, and mingled freely with the resident and outside members, I have never had any discourtesy shown to me despite the fact that my religious affiliation was well known; on the contrary, I was treated with deference and respect as only chivalrous descendants of the old Dons know how.

As there is seldom a rule without an exception, I will relate herewith an incident which smacks somewhat of religious prejudice: It is customary for the association, assisted by the ladies of the American colony, to arrange a sort of banquet for Thanksgiving Day for the benefit of the American members of both branches who have no homes of their own. The committee on invitations was composed on this occasion of two recently arrived Americans, Messrs. Coxhead and Turner. The former was the physical culture professor in the Mexican branch; Mr. Turner succeeded Mr. Babcock as secretary of the English branch, the latter having been appointed Field Secretary.

When the holiday drew near and no invitation reached me, although the few other American members of the Mexican branch had received theirs, I felt greatly disappointed—this being one of the few events all creeds join in celebrating, and thinking it, perhaps, an oversight, I approached the above-mentioned two expounders of "brotherly love" from a Christian standpoint and offered payment in advance for the privilege, but they kept silent. I then surmised the reason!

On Thanksgiving Day in the morning while at the office of L. B. Speyer & Co., private banking house, I was introduced by Mr. Speyer, whose acquaintance I had formed at the Yom Kippur services, to his brother-in-law, Mr. Murray, as "Dr." Harris, a title that seemed to stick to me since I officiated on Yom Kippur and I could not wash it off. Mr. Murray then expressed his chagrin that he had not known me before; otherwise he would have seen to it that I occupy a place of honor among the clergymen of other denominations at the Y. M. C. A. banquet that night. I then learned that this Mr. Murray was the Executive President of the Mexican branch, Y. M. C. A. I then related my experience in that banquet affair which caused Mr. Speyer to exclaim that it was a clear case of anti-Semitism and threatened to withdraw his $50 a year subscription. Mr. Murray resented the imputation, being that he himself was married to a Jewish woman, and thought it was an inadvertence, and rushed off on an investigation tour.

On the afternoon of the same day I was alone in my room, musing on the caprices of fate in casting my lot where I am considered as a fifth wheel to a wagon, when a messenger boy entered and handed me that coveted invitation, but on examining it I found that it

was merely adding insult to injury—instead of sending me an immediate invitation, to come that night, it was a stereotyped affair, asking me for an answer by mail whether a "plate" should be reserved for me, which would necessarily mean a day or so later! I then dropped the subject, and at the end of that month I moved to a private residence in the American colony.

Several months later I happened to meet Mr. Murray and in course of conversation referred to the banquet incident and was informed that the reason I did not get any invitation is because—the managers thought I was joking when repeatedly asked for an invitation and offered to pay for it!

I have not been able to determine, between these two men, Messrs. Coxhead and Turner, who it was that originated the idea to make this celebration a strictly "Christian" affair—whether it was Mr. Turner who turned the head of Mr. Coxhead, or Mr. Coxhead who put it into the head of Mr. Turner to play me that turn, but I am inclined to the former theory, as I have lived under the same roof with Mr. Coxhead, and we have always been on the most friendly terms.

Besides this little incident—as I have stated before—nothing happened to mar the pleasant relations between me and the other members.

At the dedication of the rooms which occurred while I was residing there, the vice-president, Judge Leon Alvarez, who acted as Master of Ceremonies, wishing to demonstrate the cosmopolitan character of the Association, referred to the fact that it had two "Judios" (Jews) among its members (Max Loeb and myself).

Taking in consideration all what I have written on this subject, it would seem that there is little or no religious prejudice in modern Mexico; therefore the scarcity of our people there must be ascribed to some other cause. I have previously stated my opinion that as the pay of unskilled labor in Mexico is very low the Jewish workingmen would not be able to compete with the Mexican. But this in itself is an anomaly; Mexico being a continuation of this country, with its laws based on those of ours, why then should not the same economic conditions prevail? How is it that the same Mexican laborer when he crosses the international line commands much higher wages? Various theories are advanced for this state of affairs, which are not within my province to discuss, but what is of interest to our subject is this: Maybe one of the reasons for the deplorable state of the lower classes is the lack of the Jewish middleman, small trader, manufacturer, etc., as it is known that wherever our people have settled in large numbers they have created new industries, such as the manufacture of medium and cheap grades of wearing apparel, furniture, etc. This not alone gives employment to multitudes of people, but it affords the proletariat of small means the opportunity to provide himself with commodities at a low figure, something badly needed in a land where so many of its inhabitants are clad in tatters and walk around barefooted in the most severe weather.

While on the subject of the lower classes in Mexico —nowhere have I encountered the two extremes in juxtaposition as in that country.

Beside the most novel and recent product of modern science, may be seen in use the crudest, rudest im-

plements of antiquity. Types of four centuries can be seen in a single group in any of the plazas. Under the finest palaces, whose ceilings were frescoed by Italian artists, whose walls are covered with rarest painting, and shelter libraries selected with the choicest taste, may be found a cantina (something like a "barrel-house" here, but infinitely worse), where the vile native drink, called "pulque," is dispensed, and the peon stops to eat his "tortilla." Women and men are seen carrying on their heads or shoulders enormous burdens through streets lighted by electricity and stop to ask through a telephone where their load shall be delivered.

While the Government supports schools where all the modern languages and sciences are taught, and has a compulsory education law upon the statute books, there are men with little tables or desks, in public places, conducting the correspondence for those whose literary attainments are unequal to the tasks.

In the old Inquisition Building where Jews and heretics were racked and roasted as late as in the beginning of last century, is a medical college, sustained by the Government for the free education of all students whose attainments reach the standard of matriculation; and bones are now sawn asunder in the name of science instead of religion.

Chapter VII.

MODERN MEXICO AND JEWISH COLONIZATION.

From what I have learned so far about Mexico and its people, I came to the conclusion that Spanish-America offers the best solution of the perennial Jew-

ish question, and the longer I remained there the stronger this opinion grew upon me. In this theory seemed to have shared the late lamented Baron de Hirsch who, after investigating conditions in various parts of the world, decided on Argentina as the most suitable place for colonization, and the state of affairs is almost identical in the entire stretch of country from the Rio Grande to Tierra del Fuego.

While I have always been a Zionist, and still adhere to it religiously and sentimentally, fervently hoping and praying for the ultimate restoration of part of the Jewish people to the land of their fathers, still, for immediate practical results, somewhere else must be looked to in the present dire need of our people.

That the Baron did not err in his judgment is proven by the many prosperous colonies in Argentina at present, and, incidentally, a continual growth of the Jewish population there in general. Of course, there had been, and are yet, malcontents, but this is generally the case in enterprises of such magnitude.

While there is a similitude in population and economic conditions in all the lands formerly occupied by the Spaniards, a vast diversity of climate exists, according to the altitude and the degree of latitude, and intending settlers may have their choice. This is to refute the argument that Jews from Eastern Europe, on account of their inurement to a cold climate, would not thrive in tropical or semi-tropical regions.

The fact that emigrant Jews are to be found in every habitable part of the universe, would tend to prove that they are not cowards on the subject of climate, and will go anywhere where God's air may be breathed free and unmolested.

My individual opinion is—being that the former home of our people was a semi-tropical country, and as long as we cannot procure our former possession the way we would want to, and as mapped out by the Zionists (for the time being, at least) efforts should be made to secure an analogous territory, where perennial summer is the rule; where the earth yields a variety of crops all through the year, and the poor, dejected immigrant is not frozen in eight months in the year.

Adding to the above—there are no exclusion laws in any part of Latin-America; no emigrant educational test, or any other restrictive measures. Everybody is welcome, the Mongolian and Caucasian, Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant—as they say there, "necesitamos brazos," and a pair of strong arms is the only passport.

It is not generally known that the bonds of most of the Spanish-American republics are floated by Jewish financiers, and had these latter the cause of their people at heart the same as the late Baron de Hirsch, the Jewish question would have been settled along these lines.

The climate of the City of Mexico and the surrounding highlands is strikingly like that of Southern California; except that the seasons are reversed; no rain of any consequence falling there in the winter time, and visitors, besides escaping the rigors of a northern climate, have also the advantage of a dry, exhilarating atmosphere. Adding to this the enchantment one experiences in a strange country and among a strange people, makes it a combination that eminently rewards those who could afford the luxury of travel.

Architecturally, the palaces of the rich compare favorably with the finest residences here, especially those of recent date, like the American colony and other foreign settlements. The "Paseo de la Reforma," a broad avenue leading to Chapultepec," the President's residence, is one of the wonders of the world.

Concerning the population: While the lower classes are somewhat of an inferior grade than ours, owing, in part, to the fact that many of the inhabitants are either full-blooded Indians or half-breeds, but as long as we have our own besotted denizens, who seem to have nothing else to do but to hang around low class grog shops, we must sweep before our own door first, before we criticise others. On the other hand the higher classes are more approachable than ours in the same social standing, and their politeness is proverbial. When anyone's visit is solicited, he is presented with a house; they say "Su casa" (his house). At a gathering once I was presented in this manner with 13 houses, and I seriously contemplated starting a real estate business, but the companies would not guarantee the titles, as the same "casas" were re-donated to others as they came along.

Another pleasant feature in Mexican life is the music played at frequent intervals in the city parks by select bands. The largest pleasure ground in Mexico City is the "Alameda," in the heart of the business district, where aside of the military and police bands playing there alternately, a string band dispenses sweet strains of Mexican and foreign music, nightly and Sunday morning, in an open air restaurant, situated in the middle of the park.

There are also free street exhibitions of moving pictures, inaugurated by rival cigarette companies, so that diversions are not lacking whether one has the price or not.

They have also an excellent police system. A policeman is stationed at every street intersection. and the belated pedestrian is not in danger of being pounced upon by some "hold up" and robbed of the few jinglers he has left in his pockets. and presented with a pair of black eyes in the bargain.

CHAPTER VIII.

CUERNAVACA AND GUADALAJARA.

The City of Mexico, despite its situation within the tropics, owing to the altitude, 7350 feet above the level of the sea, the climate in midwinter is rather inclement. During the summer, the daily showers cause the temperature to be mild and equable, but the dry, chilly atmosphere of the winter season induces somewhat of an exodus to more favored climes.

The nearest point of a more tropical character is the City of Cuernavaca, capital of the State of Morelos, about 5000 feet above sea level, on the line of the Mexican Central Railroad.

The trip is made in the daytime and lasts about four hours. During the traversing, the highest point on the road is reached (9895 feet,) when one imagines himself transported voluntarily to Siberia. The descent is then made gradually until one finds himself in perennial summerland.

My taking that trip had a double purpose; besides the one stated above, I also wanted to ascertain whether there are any co-religionists in that part of Mexico.

On my arrival there, about the middle of December, I was transfixed with the transcendent grandeur of scenery, serenety of climate and profusion of tropical foliage. If Father Adam ever pitched his tent in the "Garden of Eden," it must have been a territory resembling this one, and the fruit he ate like those luscious bananas hanging down in the orchard in front of the Chinese restaurant on the crest of a hill near the depot.

There is only one car line, drawn by mules, which runs on arrival and departure of trains and brings the traveler to the heart of the city, which, as usual in Mexico, centers around a plaza, with a band stand in the middle; there all the principal hotels, government houses, business and market places, etc., are located. This line zig-zags past many barrancas and waterfalls, for which this historic city is famous, and halts in the neighborhood of the principal hotels, kept by Americans, and for comfort and appointments compare favorably with those of the capital.

The rural scenery is enchanting in the extreme; notably "El Salto de San Antonio" (The Falls of St. Anthony), three miles to the west of the city. To reach it along a little trail through the Indian village of St. Anthony, is just a pleasant walk.

Among the many historical points connected with this city are the City Hall, once the palace of Cortez, and the Borda Garden, one of the most exquisite botanical aggregations in the world, owned by a French family. Here Maximilian and Carlotta had their country home. A hacienda is pointed out to the visitor,

once owned by Cortez and still in possession of his descendants.

I looked around among the signs on the business houses to see if there are any Yiddish names, but in vain. I then sought information on this subject from the owner of the hotel where I lodged, with the same result; he did not know any, although, as he stated, there might be some of whom he is not aware.

Apropos of American hotel-keepers in foreign countries—they are the most courteous and congenial of their ilk. None of the stoical, indifferent sort one meets so often at home. I had not a stich of baggage with me, as I intended to stay only a day or two, still I was welcome to the fat of the land. I asked him why he does not enforce the American rule, "no baggage, no accommodation," to which he replied that his patrons are mostly American tourists, who are well supplied with funds, and are not in the habit of cheating hotel-keepers out of their bills; but, he added, if it should happen that one of his countrymen is stranded, he is entirely welcome to whatever he could offer him, as, the way he expressed it, "he has been there himself." I thought to myself, of such is the kingdom of heaven on earth, and the world is so much to the advantage by the existence of this class of humanitarians.

On settling my bill before leaving I discovered that I gained a peso by divulging my nationality, as he insisted on reducing a dollar from the regular rate, saying that he always had a warm spot in his heart for the people of my race, who furnished religion and a code of ethics to most of the civilized nations of the world.

On my return to the City of Mexico, I made preparations for a trip to Guadalajara, dubbed, "The Pearl

of the West," the second largest city in the Republic, and the first from the point of beauty and climate, and where, according to information, a few Jewish families reside.

The train for that city leaves at six o'clock in the evening and arrives there the following day about noon. I started on that journey on the first day of January.

The Mexican Central R. R. operates a branch line to Guadalajara. In the early morning a several hours halt is made at Irapuato, the junction point of the main line, to make connections. This may well be dubbed "Strawberry Station," as venders of that fruit are scattered all around the depot, as far as the eye can reach. The prices, of course fluctuate, like stocks in Wall street on a black Friday. When the train arrives, they are as high as a spite fence; they gradually decline as the hour of departure approaches; when the shrill voice of the conductor rings out "Vamos," you can get them at your own price!

When the journey is resumed, it seems as if the open-air strawberry market was transferred to the train, as the luscious fruit occupies a place of honor everywhere, and until another transfer is made—from basket to consumer—sleep seems to be out of the question.

When finally the passengers, after comparing notes as to the size of the icicles and amount of snow they left behind them in their respective homes, are dozing again, it is only to dream of the semi-tropical beauties in store for them at dawn of day.

In this they are not disappointed, as the route now gradually descends from the highlands, the climate becomes even and mild; the train glides along through endless fields of corn and wheat, until the charming city

of Guadalajara, called "La Perla del Occidente" (the Pearl of the West), is reached.

If Cuernavaca is the "Garden of Eden," Guadalajara is the seventh heaven. During my 15 days' stay in this brightest of all Mexican cities, there was not a speck in the sky, not a stir in the air; bright, sunny and pleasantly warm during the day, refreshingly cool at night.

The Plaza, in the center of the city is the most superb sight I ever beheld. It is surrounded by massive government buildings, stately churches, imposing commercial houses, elegantly appointed restaurants, etc. In the middle of the hollow square there is a profusion of semi-tropical plants and citrus trees, bearing their golden fruit perennially, among which is embowered the Moorish pavilion, where a military band dispenses sweet strains of music every night in the year.

The city itself being 5,000 feet above sea level, is not considered fully tropical, although I have seen some tropical fruits, such as bananas, grow there to perfection, but six miles away, reached by street car, is a Barranca (canyon), 2,000 feet above sea level, where every variety of tropical fruit grows, as well as every vegetable peculiar to the Temperate Zone; therefore the good things of two zones are on the tables of Guadalajara's citizens, fresh every day.

Living expenses in Guadalajara is considerably less than in the City of Mexico. At the last station of every large city in Mexico, Hotel Runners board the train and hand passengers cards of their respective hotels. Among those I received was one from the Hotel du France, stating that board and lodging may be had there from $1.50 a day up. This looked good to me, and thither I went. On arrival I found the hostelry to be one of the best in the city; the proprietor, a Frenchman, who spoke only

French and Spanish, a most pleasant and accommodating gentleman. As I addressed him in French, and was taken by him for an American of French descent, the best the house affords was at my disposal, and all for 75 cents Amercian money a day! The meals there are taken on the veranda, encircling the entire patio, in conformity with the climate, especially at that time which is the dry season.

I remained there only one day, as I had decided before starting on that journey to stop at the Sanatorio de Guadalajara, which is operated by the Seventh Day Adventists on the hotel plan. The lowest rate there is $18 per week Mexican ($9 American) for board and lodging, and is easily worth three times as much. The building, a massive stone structure, occupies a whole square and is situated in the midst of an orange grove. The rooms are large, elegantly furnished and provided with fire places, something unusual in Mexican hotels. The meals are excellent, and although meat, especially poultry, is furnished to the guests, none of the food stuffs forbidden by the laws of Moses are in use. In fact, a Jewish aspect pervades the entire arrangements, especially on Saturday it seemed home-like to me, as extra religious services are held in the parlor in honor of the Sabbath, and no labor of any sort is performed.

As the institution is of a semi-religious nature it goes without saying that those in charge exert themselves to the utmost to make everybody feel at home. The guests, generally from Uncle Sam's domain, become imbued with the same influence and form one family group. My contemporaries were no exception and we all formed into one "bunch," visiting all places of interest together; we even formed a little club, with a meeting place under

an expansive orange tree—I was the president and a young lady from Michigan, secretary.

Among the places we visited was the State Penitentiary, an immense building occupying several blocks, and looks more like a college. There is no red tape connected with the admission; an application is made to the "Alcaide" and he graciously assigns a guide and tells the visitors that the whole thing belongs to them.

We found everything in perfect order; the prisoners at work at various occupations, and seemed to be humanely treated. As visitors pass through they stand attention, in a respectful attitude, and tip their caps.

On inquiring whether any foreigners are confined there we were taken to a ward where prisoners are held for trial and a party pointed out to us. I was horrified to see a man with strongly marked Jewish features. I addressed him in German and learned that he had acted as agent for an American firm and "forgot" to turn in some of his collections. He seemed to be satisfied with his lot.

So far this was the only Jew I had a conversation with. I have noticed in the business district, two branch houses of City of Mexico firms; one of the La Esmeralda Jewelry store, with a sign above the door, Gustav Bloch & Co.," and the other, of Rosenblum Brothers' New York Shoe Store. Whether any of the proprietors live there I was not able to ascertain.

I noticed a sign on a second story window, "Madam Karpeles, Modas" (millinery), presumably a Jewish lady.

Near the depot a Mr. Z. Kramer conducts a money exchange business and also sells cigars and curios. I exchanged some money with him, and tried to draw

him out in conversation, but he seemed to be too crabby and I left him to his reveries.

There is also an American Club in Guadalajara, but not on as an elaborate scale as in Mexico City. No introduction is required to visit the club rooms. On my first visit there I was greeted affably by the secretary and handed a two weeks' visiting card, which is a privilege accorded to all American travelers.

CHAPTER IX.

TRIP TO VERA CRUZ.

On my return to the City of Mexico, there was one more trip I desired to make—to the Tierra Caliente (Hot Country), those parts of the Republic situated at sea level. I was informed that the most interesting journey is the one to Vera Cruz, and on which I decided.

At that time—the latter part of January—the city is filled with strangers, as the tourist season is at its height. Hotel prices and commodities are inflated, and it is almost as cheap to travel as to stay at home; therefore, after passing one night at an overcrowded hotel I left in the morning on an excursion to Vera Cruz, the last and most interesting of my side trips.

The road (260 miles) is a master feat of engineering, and has been described more than anything else in Mexico. It is traversed nearly all in the day time, and with the gigantic, snow-peaked mountain Orizaba continuously in sight, it forms a scene never to be forgotten. There are horseshoe curves which almost permit

the traditional feat in which the brakeman of the rear car is said to light his pipe at the locomotive. We pass tunnels and trestle bridges, see our route above and below us on the hills in such varied ways that it is hardly possible to understand that these are not so many different roads instead of the same. There is a point near Maltrata, distant but two and a half miles in a direct line, which must be reached by twenty miles of zigzag.

Until Orizaba is reached, about four o'clock in the afternoon, the descent from the temperate to the torrid zone is not so noticeable, and the mind is absorbed in the artistic wonders wrought by men. From that city to the coast the train glides through a level country, flanked on both sides by a long stretch of banana and coffee plantations, and the traveler becomes conscious of at last being in the tropics, and he admires the beauties of nature rather than human skill, as in the previous part of the journey. The characteristic of the venders at the small stations is also changed, and they are laden with a large variety of tropical fruits which they offer for a song, and if you cannot sing, they will sell you some for a few centavos.

Among the passengers whose acquaintance I formed while in the crowded car was a German Jew. We became quite friendly and spent the rest of the trip in each other's company. He was a middle-aged bachelor; came to this country about the same time I did. But instead of drifting to the large cities and become one of the "dreamers of the ghetto," he, like many of his countrymen, penetrated into the wild, sparsely settled Far West, engaged in mercantile pursuits, and

now, at the approach of old age, the care of sustentation is no more an ingredient of his existence, as he has retired from active commercial life on a competency.

This much must be admitted of our German co-religionists—as a rule, on arrival in this country, after having acquired a sound commercial training in the cultured "fatherland," they do not tarry in the congested centers of population, but become pioneers in some unexplored region, returning to the large cities after having earned enough to establish themselves as bankers or wholesale merchants.

On the other hand, we of the benighted Slavonian countries, especially Russia, where an academic education has been either denied us in our youth or partly obtained with great difficulty, by stress of circumstances, usually settle in the overcrowded cities. the proletariat to compete with the skilled native; the class called "Maskilim," which is a modern product, whose stock in trade is a vast knowledge of the Talmud and "Moreh Nebuchim," and a smattering of European languages, lead an uncertain existence, and are the real dreamers immortalized by Zangwill.

Of course, this is only a general survey of the situation—there are many exceptions to the above rule, but the latter is enough in evidence to set me musing on the contrast between my new friend and myself. While he was care-free, and already devising plans where to pass the coming winter, my future was as uncertain and lugubrious as when I first landed in the land of the free!

We arrived at our destination early in the evening and found the place fully deserving the appellation "hot country." Anything approaching it would be difficult to imagine, except, perhaps, on a Fourth of July in New York, when the natural high temperature is superadded by the calorific celebration of the rising generation.

The hotels were crowded with tourists, and the wily proprietors, taking advantage of the overflow, charged all kinds of prices. I managed to make a bargain with one of them for myself and the quota that followed me—in order to benefit of my knowledge of the vernacular—and we then repaired to the dining room, situated in close proximity to the sidewalk, as to remain indoors seemed to be out of the question. We whiled away our time in the open air till about midnight, when the temperature became sufficiently moderated to venture into our rooms.

We were assured by the natives that a "norther" from Uncle Sam's icy coasts blows in occasionally and converts the atmosphere into a refrigerator, but this did not materialize during our brief sojourn.

We rose early in order to take stock and see what that part of the world looks like. We found conditions about the same as described by many travelers. They are so deplorable that it is doubtful whether a similarity is to be found even among Mexican cities. The only redeeming feature is the street cleaning, which is done by buzzards, or as they call them there "zopilotes," of a glossy blackness, as they will never strike for higher wages. The principal thoroughfare, called "Calle de la Independencia," leads to a short, concrete-

covered promenade, bordered with benches and a double row of cocoanut-palms, which makes a pleasing sight in the midst of misery.

I have not seen any signs of Jewish activity, although it was stated that several Jewish families reside there.

We had intended to stay in Vera Cruz a few days, but as the scheduled "norther" kept hovering around Galveston, and without it the climatic conditions were literally as the name implies a "true cross" to bear, we concluded to take the first train out, which leaves Vera Cruz about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. On settling our bill at the hotel, the proprietor wanted to charge for two days instead of one, claiming that we ought to have notified him early in the morning of our intended departure, and after some parlance, in which I threatened to invoke the aid of "Teddy" and his "palo grande," we compromised by paying him half of the charge for a day.

Before the train left, most of the excursionists of the previous day were on board. There seemed to be a general anxiety to leave that unfavored spot behind. My friend and I and several fellow passengers concluded to stop over night at Orizaba, considered tropical but not of too oppressive a kind. When the train pulled out everybody seemed to rejoice at being again in the open air, enjoying the exquisite scene of a winter afternoon in the tropics.

At Cordoba, about midway between Vera Cruz and Orizaba, our Hebraic clan was augmented by the stepping on board of Mr. J. B. Cain, resident salesman for the Republic of Mexico of the Wertheimer & Swartz

Shoe Company, of St. Louis, Mo. He is a native of New Orleans, where his father, the late Lambert B. Cain, was for many years president of the Metropolitan Bank, and one of the most influential citizens of the Crescent City. Mr. Cain, Jr., was one of the organizers of the short-lived congregation Emanuel in Mexico City.

Anyone who has never ventured outside of his native soil, where mere numbers cause sometimes callousness even among people of the same sect, can have no conception of the ecstasy experienced on greeting one of his kind in a strange land, so, after introducing my German-Jewish friend to Mr. Cain, we settled down to a pleasant chat until Orizaba was reached. There we followed Mr. Cain to the hotel where he generally puts up on making his rounds, and which is one of the best in the city, with the charge for accommodations about half as in our country under same conditions.

After supper we strolled up to the center of the city, with Mr. Cain as guide. We first visited the Alameda, which with its fountains, stone seats, orange trees, and other shrubberies, makes a most charming Vista; from there we went to the Zocalo, where a most novel and unique sight met our gaze, in the large hollow square, innumerable elongated tables, surrounded by benches, were in position, at which were an immense concourse of people gambling at various games of chance. There was music galore and all other ingredients which go to make up a country fair. We were informed that this is the annual Fiesta, which is held there in mid-winter for a period of three months. We left Mr. Cain

there, who joined in the sport, and returned to our hotel.

During the night, what I presume to be the tail end of the delayed "norther," blew up from the Gulf. It was almost of cyclonic force and to repose while it lasted was out of the question. This is the only freak of nature that mars what otherwise seems to be topographical perfection.

The following morning, after breakfast, my friend and I and two other Americans enjoyed a carriage ride through the city and surrounding coffee plantations, for which we paid only two dollars Mexican money for two hours' riding, which is ridiculously low in comparison with prices in this country. We found that the city justly earns the reputation of being one of the most beautiful in the republic; especially attractive is the market place with its large variety of tropical fruits.

While passing through the residence part of the city I noticed a sign "Leon Hirsch" in front of a neat stone house. What occupation Mr. Hirsch is following I did not ascertain. This party and "Gustave Mayer & Co.," cigar manufacturers, are the only Jews I know of in that part of the country.

Early in the afternoon we resumed our return trip to the City of Mexico.

CHAPTER X.

MY LAST DAYS IN MEXICO.

It was about middle of February when I again arrived in the Mexican capital, and although the object of my undertaking this journey had previously been accomplished, and I was anxious to return to the United States, still, as the climate there at that time is particularly pleasant, being dry and exhiliarating, I concluded to remain the balance of the winter.

Until then I was on a tour of investigation, but now I looked around for an opportunity to earn some Mexican pesos. This soon materialized from different sources. Several young Turkish Jews are engaged in business there. They are of Spanish descent and are proficient in the Latin languages, but their knowledge of Uncle Sam's idiom is limited. I had formed their acquaintance on Yom Kippur, as they were among the worshipers. As I was now disengaged, they engaged me to instruct them in the English language, this being the most used next to Spanish. Adding to this, the Guardiola Hotel, where I lodged, happened to have a night clerk that spoke only Spanish, and my services were often requisitioned to act as interpreter; through this I incidentally discovered a source of revenue—that American commercial travelers generally employ interpreters to introduce them to the trade, as they term it there. The compensation is $10 a day and expenses while on duty. In this manner I was kept constantly occupied until my time of departure, by the end of March.

During the brief period of my acting as an international salesman I sold, or rather helped to sell, nearly

every article under the sun; from crutches to patent shoe leather. The American drummers, otherwise "jolly good fellows," are especially so in a foreign country, where their volubility has to filter through a proxy. They generally combine business with pleasure, and after devoting a few hours a day to "seeing the trade," or as the representative of the Wagner Leather Co., San Francisco, called it, "nosy around," they pass the rest of the day "seeing the sights."

One morning after my arrangements had been made to leave for the United States in a few days, I was called to the hotel office to act as interpreter for a prospective guest. It did not require a microscope to discern the Hebraic features in the new arrival. The recognition seemed to be mutual, but it was rather a delicate subject to broach after an acquaintance of only a few moments. However, on looking in the Register I noticed "Dr. Leopold Wintner, Brooklyn, N. Y.," and I knew then that the clerical looking, elderly gentleman before me was Rabbi Wintner, of Temple Beth Elohim, Brooklyn. I then canceled whatever business engagements some travelers had with me by referring them to another interpreter, and my last few days' stay in Mexico I spent mostly in his company, showing him around, etc. Incidentally I introduced him to some Jewish people, who happened to be Austrians; it seems that this left him under the impression that the majority of the Jews there belong to that nationality, as I noticed a statement made by him to this effect in one of our Jewish newspapers. The fact is, that those I introduced him to are about the limit, and the most of the Jews there are Germans, French, and native Americans. As my return ticket to the United States was

bought before we met; I was obliged to leave him before he finished his itinerary, much to his regret, as he was anxious to have me accompany him on some side trips.

I returned to this country via the Mexican National, by the way of Laredo and San Antonio, and arrived in this city on April 18th, the day made memorable by the 'Frisco disaster.

With this my narrative ends, and I take occasion to thank those who were patient enough to read this long-drawn-out story of my trip to our picturesque neighboring republic.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

There is an axiom in the "Ethics of the Fathers," which says: "Who is a wise man, who learns from every man." With this as an apology, I venture to express my opinion on the momentous topic which at present engages the serious attention of our philanthropists of both hemispheres—where to find a home for the millions of our persecuted, homeless co-religionists in Eastern Europe. Despite the strenuous, almost superhuman efforts of the lamented creator of modern Zionism, Dr. Herzl and the subsequent laudable exertions of Zangwill and others to secure a territory, Palestine is still in full possession of the Sultan, and the territorial subject is as yet largely problematical. The situation, however is so precarious that it does not brook any procrastination.

According to information I gained while sojourning in Mexico, that immense territory situated just south of our country, Baja California, would, with proper measures taken, support a population of twenty

million, whereas at present it only contains an insignificant number of people. The firm of Speyer & Co., Bankers, London, Frankfort and New York, is the financial agent of the present Mexican government. It would be at least worth the attempt, on the part of those who possess the influence, to induce the Speyers to enter into negotiation with the proper Mexican authorities for either an autonomous possession in Lower California or colonizatian on a large scale.

I respectfully submit this suggestion to the consideration of those who have the welfare of their brethren at heart, and are able to do something.

THE AUTHOR.

PRESS OF
HOWE & CAMPBELL
LOS ANGELES